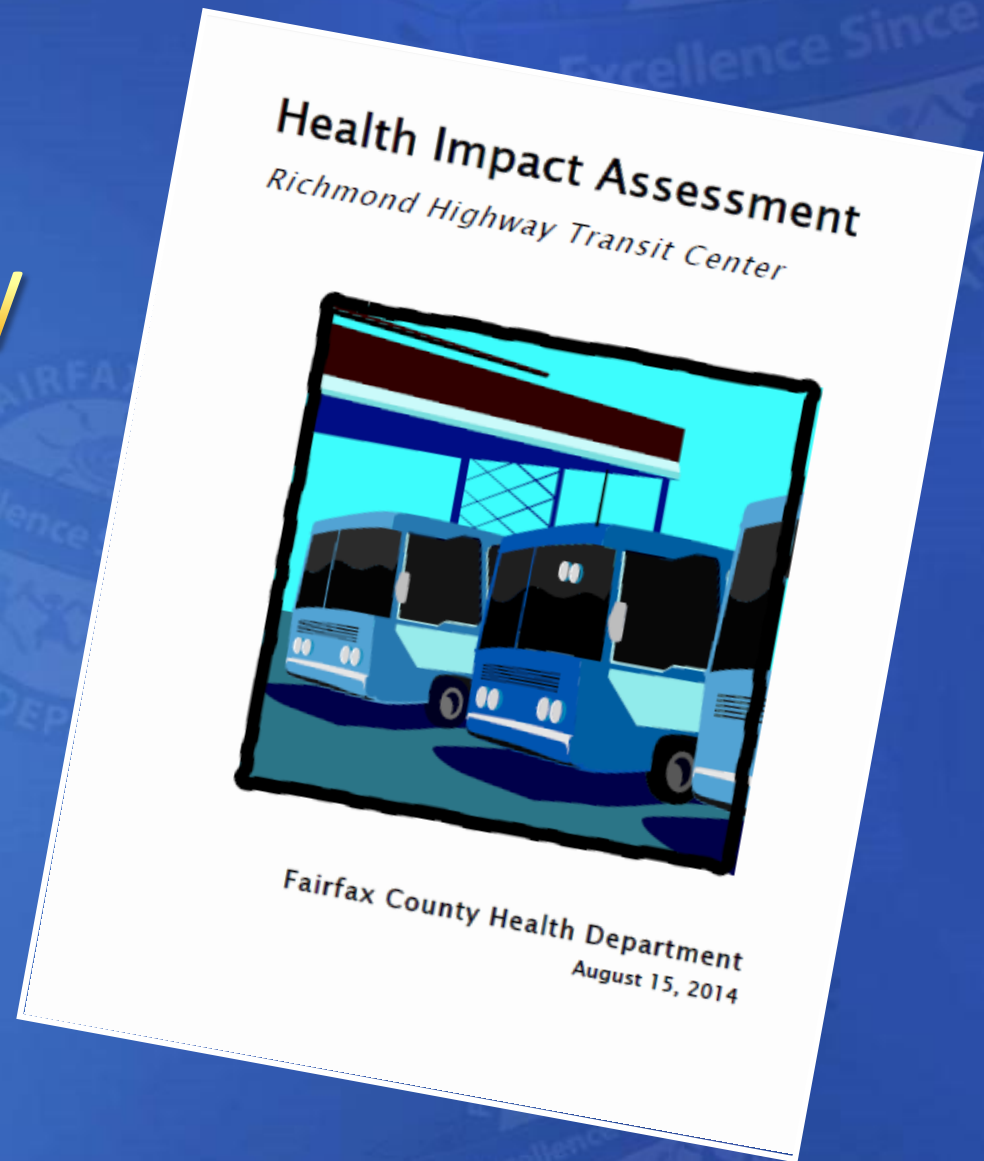


Richmond Highway Transit Center

Health Impact
Assessment
July 2015



Fairfax County
Health Department

Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

- A practical approach that uses data, research and stakeholder input to determine a policy or project's impact on the health of a population
- A useful way to ensure that health and health disparities are considered in decision-making
- Provides recommendations to support positive health outcomes, avoid harmful health impacts, and promote health equity



Community Health Improvement Plan (2013-18)

Priority Issue: Healthy and Safe Physical Environment

- **Goal:** Develop and implement policies that promote healthy and safe physical environments for all who live, work, and play in the Fairfax community
- **Objective:** Increase the number of community, street, park, and transportation policies for the environment that support positive community health outcomes



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Community Health Improvement Plan (2013-18)

Key Actions: Healthy and Safe Physical Environment

- Educate local government staff and decision makers on the principles of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach
- Develop recommendations for providing parks and non-traditional park amenities for communities that are redeveloping, underserved, or economically challenged
- Evaluate policy alternatives identified as best practice models for community use of athletic fields



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Community Health Improvement Plan (2013-18)

Key Actions: Healthy and Safe Physical Environment

- Study transportation, planning, zoning, and development review processes to identify opportunities to incorporate health benefits and impact analyses into current policy frameworks
- Develop recommendations using national best practices for health considerations to be integrated into existing policies, plans, and procedures
- Conduct an assessment to identify barriers to accessing parks, fields, and recreational facilities in redeveloping, underserved, or economically challenged communities



HIA Team

- NACCHO HIA project grant
 - January - June 2014
 - Technical assistance
 - Part-time staff position
- HIA Team members included:
 - Health Department
 - Dept. of Transportation
 - Dept. of Neighborhood and Community Services
 - Dept. Housing and Community Development
 - Park Authority
 - Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax (PFHF)



Project Description

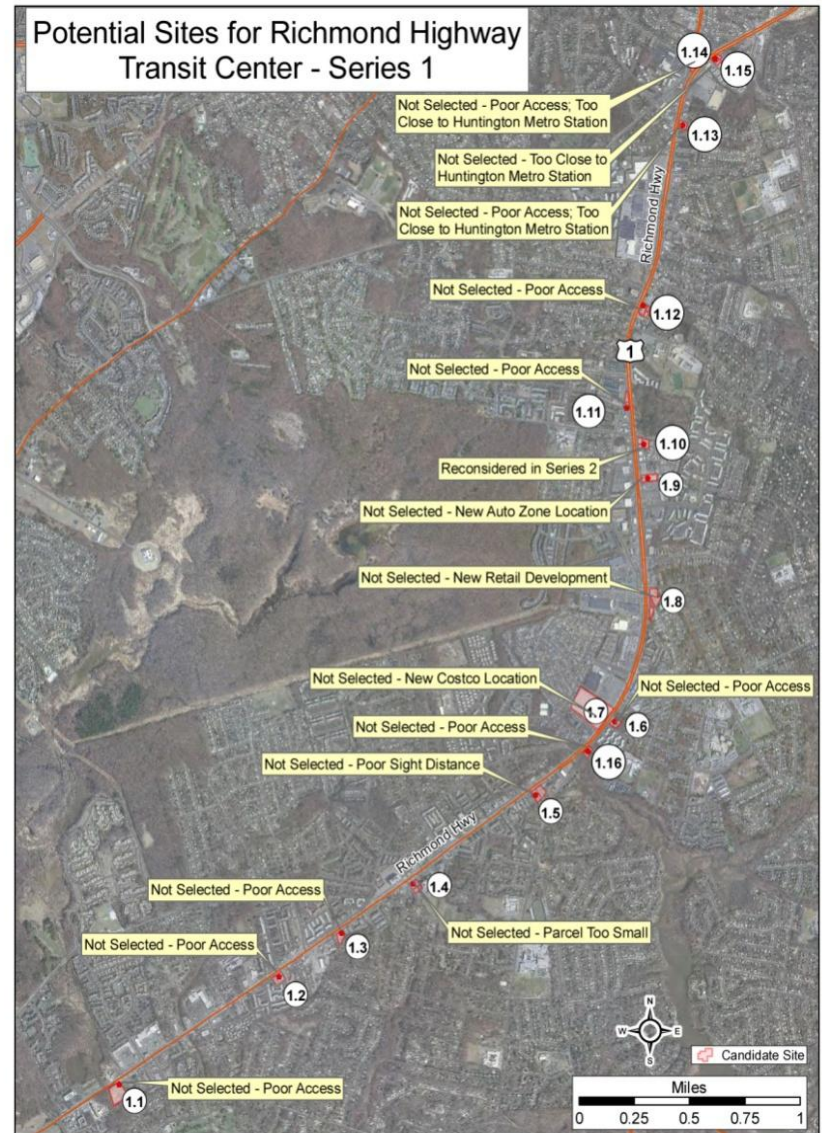
- Richmond Highway (Route 1): an important artery that connects major commercial, residential and recreational points in Fairfax County as well as Northern Virginia
- A new transit center had been proposed to improve access to transportation and enhance existing bus services currently provided by the Fairfax County Department of Transportation and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority



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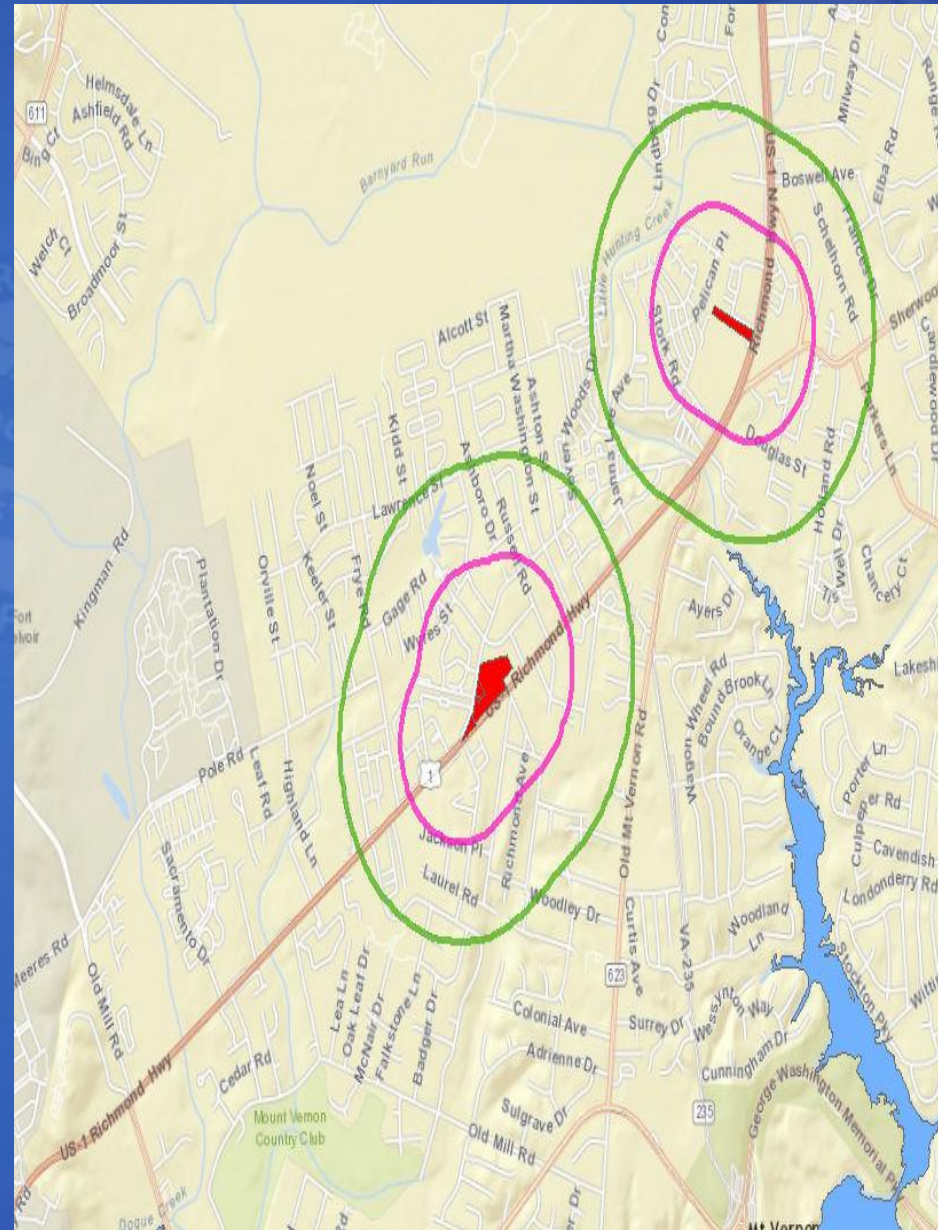
Project Description (con't)

- Over 30 potential transit center sites had been evaluated and two viable locations were identified for further study, known as Site B and Site C



Project Description (con't)

- To help inform the site selection process, the HIA was undertaken to examine the potential health effects of establishing the transit center at each site



Step 1: SCREENING

- FCHD and FCDOT met in November 2013 to discuss the potential of conducting an HIA
- It was determined that an HIA could inform residents and policy makers in the decision-making process by examining the health impacts of locating the transit station at either of the two proposed sites, and by offering recommendations to monitor and manage potential health effects
- An HIA could also address community concerns about the impacts of the transit center on traffic safety, air pollution, access to parks, community violence, access to goods and services (i.e., healthy foods) and protection of community safety and cohesion



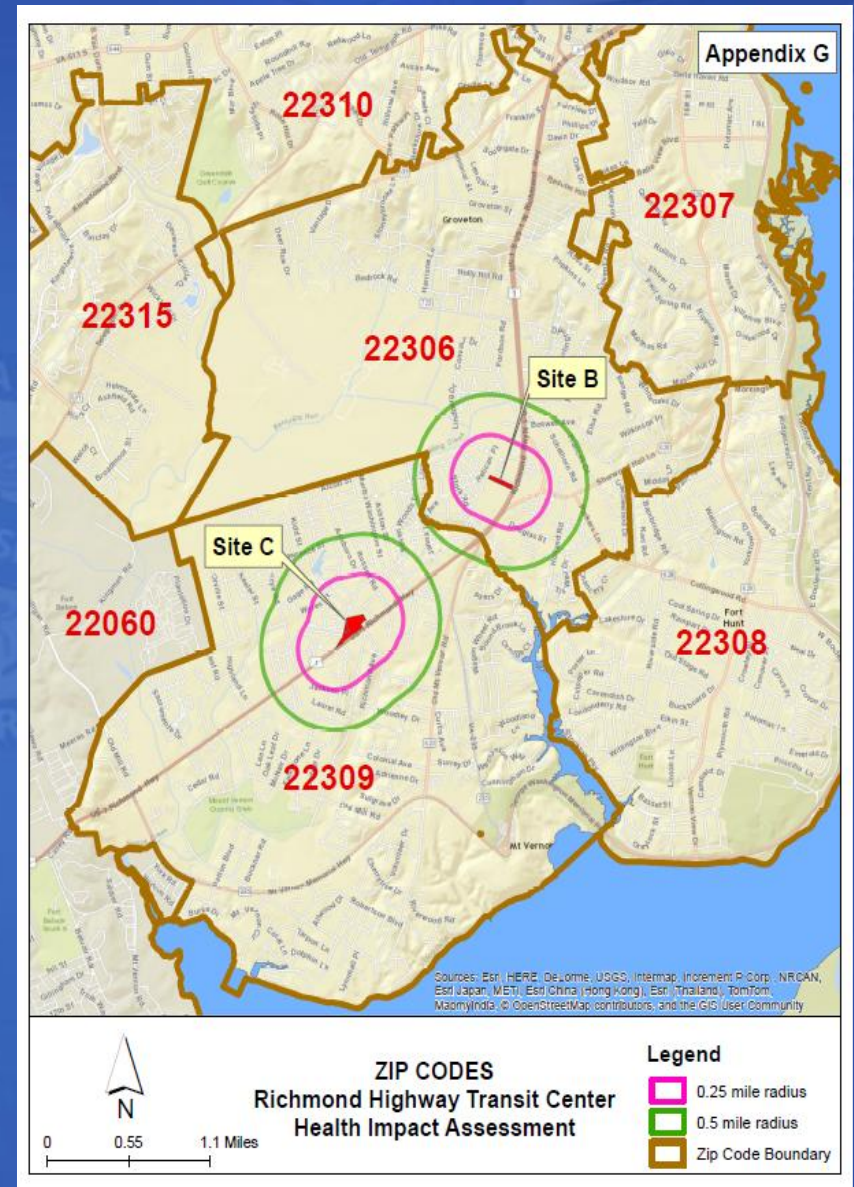
Step 2: SCOPING

- Engagement with governmental partners and community stakeholders
- Identification of several focus areas for the assessment, developed research questions, and specified the methods and sources for data collection
- It was determined that the HIA would provide stakeholders with much needed information about the potential effects of the transit center in six health-related focus areas



HIA Focus Areas

- Mobility along the corridor
- Access to goods and services
- Access to places for physical activity
- Access to affordable housing, employment and educational institutions
- Environmental conditions (air and noise)
- Community safety and cohesion



Step 3: ASSESSMENT

- Included the collection of baseline data to describe the health status and populations affected by the proposed transit center sites based on peer-reviewed research and community health indicators
- Impact analysis was conducted via a literature review based primarily on peer-reviewed, empirical research
- Data were analyzed at sub-county levels (zip code, school boundaries and census tract) when available



Step 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations based on the synthesis of baseline data with literature review findings
- Important considerations for decision-makers and planners were identified for each of the focus areas
- Can be used by policymakers, governmental partners and community stakeholders to inform and guide the decision-making process by examining the intended and unintended impacts of the RHTC
- Provided a mechanism to develop strategies to mitigate potential health risks and monitor ongoing concerns



Focus Area 1:

Public transit access and mobility along the corridor

Key Recommendations... A complete list of recommendations can be found in the final report.

- Maintain street connectivity between the RHTC and neighborhoods within a 0.5 mile radius to allow pedestrian and bicycle access to the transit center from area businesses and housing units.
- Develop and implement a marketing plan for current and potential riders focusing on the use of the RHTC as a way to increase access to additional transit, reduce traffic crashes, decrease driving time and save on household transportation costs.



Focus Area 2:

Access to goods and services, healthy food, healthcare and community services

- Configure routes to maximize access of area residents to local food sources (i.e., grocery stores), healthcare centers, and community services during hours of operation for these types of businesses.
- Identify and prioritize the needs of those who are transit dependent. A survey or other research can be used to understand these needs.



Focus Area 3:

Access to places for physical activity, open spaces, parks and playgrounds

- Include the proposed new soccer field if Site B is chosen. Ensure that the field will be maintained, safe and accessible to area residents.
- Develop and implement a marketing plan for current and potential riders focusing on the use of the RHTC as a way to be more physically active (active transport and commuting) and to save on household transportation costs.



Focus Area 4:

Access to affordable housing, employment opportunities and educational institutions

- Configure routes to maximize access of area residents to the Metro, centers of employment, and colleges and universities, especially during peak times of the day.
- Preserve existing affordable housing along the corridor as well as near the RHTC site.



Focus Area 5: Air quality and noise levels

- Use clean diesel combustion engines and follow EPA guidelines for heavy-duty engines and vehicle standards.
- Adhere to EPA guidelines for bus noise levels so as not to exceed 80 decibels.



Focus Area 6: Community safety and cohesion

- Include safety features, such as lighting, security cameras, complete sidewalks and trails, crosswalks, crossing signals, police presence, bike racks and secure parking in the design of the RHTC.
- Solicit comments, suggestions and feedback from area residents before, during and after the site selection process and construction of the RHTC.



Step 5: REPORTING

The HIA report is available to other stakeholders and the general public online at:

- Fairfax County Health Department's website at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/> and on www.healthimpactpartners.org
- The Community Health Dashboard at www.livehealthyfairfax.org



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Step 6: MONITORING

- A team member survey was conducted to evaluate the HIA process, team member engagement and satisfaction, team communications, organizational capacity, lessons learned and outcomes
- Long term monitoring is being completed by the FCHD and FCDOT to determine how and if the HIA findings were used in the final site selection
- The HIA team believed that the data, impact analysis and recommendations identified through the HIA project will be useful to help inform the final site location decision



HIA CONCLUSIONS

- Overall, the findings indicate that the RHTC has the potential to positively impact the health of residents living near both sites
- For example, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities could greatly advance the new transit center's positive impact on health through:
 - improving walkability
 - improving access to employment and educational opportunities
 - reducing vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle injuries and fatalities
 - improving neighborhood safety and security



HIA BENEFITS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

- The project has led to increased local expertise in HIA, and improved community design and built environment decisions by including health considerations in the process
- The Health Department, Department of Transportation, Department of Housing, and PFHF worked collaboratively to conduct the HIA and integrate health considerations into policy making across sectors



HIA BENEFITS (CON'T)

- The HIA process was very educational for all team members and demonstrated collaboration across agencies to benefit the Fairfax community
- The HIA has enhanced local efforts to demonstrate the potential for improved community health outcomes using a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to decision making



Thank you

Questions?

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